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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 30 October 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

This is our fifth letter regarding the ongoing criminal Israeli actions against the Palestinian population in Occupied East Jerusalem. This systematic Israeli policy of aggression and discrimination against the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem has created a highly volatile and dangerous situation. Israel, the occupying Power, demolished another eight Palestinian homes in various neighbourhoods of the city on Monday, 26 October 2009, displacing 26 civilians, including 10 children. This brings to over 600 the number of Palestinians displaced by the occupying Power in Occupied East Jerusalem since the beginning of the year through its illegal policies of forced eviction and house demolition.

Since its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has demolished over 24,000 Palestinian homes. Reports also confirm that at least 1,500 new demolition orders against Palestinians in East Jerusalem are also in process. These Israeli actions of enforced displacement of Palestinians to replace them with illegal settlers are blatantly illegal and must be condemned and seriously addressed by the international community. Moreover, such actions are considered war crimes according to article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and are considered to be a violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and, in accordance with article 147, constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law. They are also in violation of numerous United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980).

In the incidents of this week, clashes erupted between the forcibly displaced Palestinians and the Israeli occupying forces demolishing their homes, resulting in the injury of several civilians and the detention of a dozen others. The clashes, while limited in nature, are a continuation of the systematic attempts by Israel, the occupying Power, to provoke violence and increase tension in the occupied city, providing further evidence that the right-wing government in Israel lacks the will and commitment to the principles of the peace process.

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In addition to the punitive measures against Palestinian residents in Occupied East Jerusalem, an Israeli court has once again banned Mr. Hatem Abdul Qader, the Palestinian official in charge of Jerusalem affairs, from entering his native city of Jerusalem for three weeks. Israel also persists with the escalation of other repressive measures against Palestinians in East Jerusalem, including the sanctioning of further settlement expansion in and around the city.

This is a situation of urgency and grave seriousness. We believe it merits decisive action by the international community to prevent a further escalation of the situation on the ground. It is in the interest of all parties concerned with achieving peace in the region to put an end to these illegal and provocative actions that Israel, the occupying Power, seems determined to continue. We must join forces to combat such provocation and extremism, which will only further destabilize the situation and undermine the drive for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 347 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 26 October 2009 (A/ES-10/467-S/2009/554), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations